



**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

**December 31, 2008  
For immediate release**

**NOTE TO EDITORS:** EcoNewsWire is being issued early this week due to the New Year's Day holiday and will resume its normal Thursday schedule next week.

- 1. Boil advisory continues in Creston and portions of seven southern counties**
- 2. Take a bird's eye view back to the 1930s on your land**
- 3. One month left to apply for the Governor's Iowa Environmental Excellence Awards**
- 4. Henry and Des Moines county residents asked to share ideas on improving Lake Geode**

## **BOIL ADVISORY CONTINUES IN CRESTON AND PORTIONS OF SEVEN SOUTHERN COUNTIES**

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Dan Stipe, supervisor, Atlantic DNR Field Office, at (712) 243-1934.

**NOTE TO EDITORS:** Please go directly to the previous story on the DNR Web site at <http://www.iowadnr.com/news/08dec/creston.html> to determine the customers within your circulation or broadcast area who are included in the advisory.

CRESTON—Customers of the city of Creston and those who purchase water from the Creston-based Southern Iowa Rural Water Association should continue to boil water used for consumption until further notice.

The customers affected are in parts of the following counties: Adams, Clarke, Decatur, Madison, Ringgold, Taylor and Union. A more complete list of customers is available on

the DNR Web site at [www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov) or directly at <http://www.iowadnr.com/news/08dec/creston.html> .

Customers should continue to follow the boil advisory. This is a precautionary measure in case disease-causing organisms contaminated the drinking water.

The city is still working to re-establish adequate filtration.

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## **TAKE A BIRD'S EYE VIEW BACK TO THE 1930S ON YOUR LAND**

**MEDIA CONTACT: Kathyne Clark, geographic information section, (515) 281-4583 or Mel Pins, brownfield program, (515) 281-8489.**

**NOTE TO EDITORS: 1930s and 2008 aerial photos are available to compare the past and present in Iowa cities or rural areas. Please call Mel Pins at (515) 281-8489 or email [Mel.Pins@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Mel.Pins@dnr.iowa.gov) for specific photos.**

DES MOINES – If you'd like to play detective and find out what was happening on your property in the 1930s, the DNR can help.

Early this month, the DNR and partners unveiled a complete set of Iowa's aerial photos taken in the 1930s shortly after Congress authorized federal help for farmers struggling with soil erosion and the Dust Bowl.

Completing the job on Dec. 8, 2008, Iowa is the third state in the U.S. to compile these photos into a digital format that anyone can view. Only Connecticut and Delaware have completed similar projects.

No specialized software or knowledge is required. These aerial photos can be used by anyone with access to a computer and the Internet. So, if you'd like to see if your city block was once a corn field or if the Cedar River has changed its channel near your farm, the information is at your finger tips.

"There is just no other kind of information like this," said Kathyne Clark, a DNR geographic information systems analyst, who manages the historic aerial photography projects.

Map viewers can look at their favorite park or hunting spot to see what their parents or grandparents would have seen. Or they can compare 1930s vegetation and river channels with today's crop fields and man-built lakes. Recently-built terraces and other conservation practices contrast starkly with the gullies and eroded fields of the '30s.

“It’s kind of fun to track the changes in the landscape over the past 70 years,” Clark said. “A lot of people use the photos to check out their farmstead’s history. You can see a huge improvement in erosion control over the years.”

The photos have regulatory and resource management uses, too. Mel Pins, who coordinates DNR’s brownfield program, frequently looks back in time. He compares historic aerial photos with present day photos to determine if former industrial sites might affect redevelopment of an area.

“Often when people want to buy an industry or property, they are curious about its history,” said Pins. “They want to see the past uses of the property to determine if there are present-day environmental issues.”

Environmental and legal records typically don’t go back that far or often don’t indicate land uses that could have an environmental or natural resource effect, he said. “So, this is just one more tool that can help us find if the past is casting a shadow on the present.”

Old open dumps, landfills, and chemical loading and storage areas are the types of past uses that could impact the future. “Sometimes the photos show that the risks or scope of the problem area are much less than we anticipated,” Pins said.

Find the photos under Mapping on the DNR homepage at [www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov) or find them directly at [www.iowadnr.gov/mapping/index.html](http://www.iowadnr.gov/mapping/index.html). Choose the Basic Map and Air Photography Viewer. First time users can also find instructions at this site. Or, try the Iowa State University Orthoserver at <http://ortho.gis.iastate.edu> .

Technical users with specialized software can use the photos on the Natural Resources Geographic Information System library at [www.igsb.uiowa.edu/nrgislib/](http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu/nrgislib/).

### ***Sidebar: Tracking Historic Photos took Detective Work***

The DNR had to do its own detective work to track down the aerial photos, originally authorized in 1933. The forerunner of today’s USDA Farm Service Agency ordered the statewide aerial photography as a tool to review land uses, ensure compliance with acreage reduction programs and develop soil surveys.

It took four years to find and process these first statewide aerial photos. Originally housed in what are now the county offices of the Farm Service Agency, some of these photos had been lost. Most were found in the Iowa Department of Transportation’s archives where they were used to develop roads. The DNR and partners unearthed other photos in USDA offices and the University of Iowa’s Map Library. As a last resort, the DNR purchased some photos from the National Archive.

Once found, the DNR and Iowa State University had to align the older photos with current ones, and then weave the photos together by county, before they could create the computerized version.

The project was funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Iowa DNR. "Iowa was the first state to use brownfield money for this project," said Mel Pins, brownfield coordinator. "We used a federal grant to find the aerial photos in highly populated areas where we were most likely to find some industrial sites that could potentially be contaminated. Then we expanded the project to cover the entire state."

Brownfields are abandoned, idled or under-used industrial and commercial areas where real or perceived environmental contamination can complicate expansion or redevelopment.

The brownfields program has funded the project at about \$40,000 to \$50,000 per year, most of it spent on staff time to locate the photos, compare new and old photos and create the new photo images.

Project partners have also provided funding and technical support. They include Iowa State University's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Facility, and the DNR's Brownfields Recovery Program and GIS Section.

Pins, also an amateur historian, said that it's essential to preserve these first aerial photos as this kind of land use history is just not available from other sources. "The best historical land use resource we previously had were the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, produced from the 1860s through the 1970s," he said.

"But they only covered larger cities and no rural areas. And, local archives, including building permits, property abstracts, and city directories simply did not indicate the type of land use that might have natural resource impacts," Pins added. "There's nothing better than truly being able to look back in time at a real aerial photo of a site."

As a next project, the DNR is actively acquiring aerial photos from the 1950s to preserve land use information. As funding becomes available, the partners will move forward in time, producing web-based, computerized aerial photos from each decade in the latter half of the Twentieth Century.

Unfortunately, information from the 1940s will not be available because statewide aerial photos were not taken in that decade due to World War II.

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**ONE MONTH LEFT TO APPLY FOR THE GOVERNOR'S IOWA ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

**MEDIA CONTACT: Emily Grover at (515) 242-5955 or  
[Emily.Grover@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Emily.Grover@dnr.iowa.gov)**

DES MOINES — Iowa businesses, organizations and citizens have one month to apply for the Governor's Iowa Environmental Excellence Awards. To download an application, go to [www.iowadnr.gov/other/ee/index.html](http://www.iowadnr.gov/other/ee/index.html); applications are due Jan. 31, 2009.

These awards are the premier environmental honors in Iowa, recognizing leadership and innovation in the protection of Iowa's water, land and air.

"As Governor, I am committed to protecting the land, lakes, rivers and streams that we all love," said Governor Culver. "To do so will require the hard work of all Iowans, including Iowa's business community. I am proud to recognize those businesses who share in our common commitment to the environment, and I encourage all those who are joining in our efforts to keep Iowa beautiful to apply for the Governor's Iowa Environmental Excellence award."

Awards will be given for overall Environmental Excellence, along with Special Project Awards in:

- Air Quality
- Energy Efficiency/Renewable Energy
- Habitat Restoration
- Waste Management
- Water Quality
- Environmental Education
- Disaster Recovery

This year, two special project categories have been created. The first, for Environmental Education, will recognize a program that helps to engage and empower participants to be stewards of their local natural resources.

In addition, a Disaster Recovery category exclusively for 2008 will honor an organization that utilized beneficial environmental practices in recovering from one of this year's destructive weather-related events.

The awards program is coordinated by the Iowa Governor's Office, the Department of Natural Resources, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, the Iowa Department of Economic Development, the Iowa Department of Education, the Iowa Department of Public Health and the Iowa Waste Reduction Center.

For more information and to download an application, go to [www.iowadnr.gov/other/ee/index.html](http://www.iowadnr.gov/other/ee/index.html) or contact Emily Grover at (515) 242-5955 or [Emily.Grover@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Emily.Grover@dnr.iowa.gov).

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## **HENRY AND DES MOINES COUNTY RESIDENTS ASKED TO SHARE IDEAS ON IMPROVING LAKE GEODE**

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Jeff Berckes at (515) 281-4791 or [jeff.berckes@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:jeff.berckes@dnr.iowa.gov); or Charles Ikenberry at (515) 281-8753 or [charles.ikenberry@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:charles.ikenberry@dnr.iowa.gov).

DANVILLE – Iowans interested in improving Lake Geode in Henry and Des Moines counties can attend a meeting Jan. 15 to discuss and review a recent water quality study and its suggestions for improving the lake.

Lake Geode is on the state's impaired waters list because of high levels of pH and excess *E. coli* in the water, which may indicate the presence of disease-causing pathogens. Phosphorus from soil erosion and livestock manure contribute to Geode's high pH. Livestock manure, failing septic systems and geese at the swimming beach appear to be the primary contributors of *E. coli* to the lake.

The study, or DNR water quality improvement plan, looks at the problems and potential solutions for the problems in Lake Geode. It is designed as a guide for improving the lake for local resource agencies, partners, stakeholders and residents.

"Lake Geode is an important resource to the residents of the area," said Jeff Berckes with the DNR's Watershed Improvement program. "We look forward to presenting the research results with engaged citizens to discuss how we can improve water quality together and how to put an effective plan into action."

The DNR will ask Iowans for their input at the Jan. 15 meeting in Geode State Park. The meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m. at the Geode State Park Office, 3333 Racine Avenue, Danville.

Staff from the DNR's Lake Restoration program, Watershed Improvement program and Fisheries and Wildlife bureaus will also be on hand to answer questions.

Those not able to attend the public meeting can receive more information at [www.iowadnr.gov/water/watershed/tmdl/publicnotice.html](http://www.iowadnr.gov/water/watershed/tmdl/publicnotice.html) and submit comments on the plan by Feb. 9 via:

E-mail: [jeff.berckes@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:jeff.berckes@dnr.iowa.gov)

Telephone: Jeff Berckes at (515) 281-4791

Mail: Jeff Berckes, care of Iowa DNR, Wallace State Office Building,  
502 E. Ninth St., Des Moines, Iowa 50319

After gathering Iowans' comments, the DNR will forward the final plan, also called by its technical name of Total Maximum Daily Load, to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for approval. Local groups interested in helping Lake Geode can then use the plan to assist their improvement efforts.